

MySpace? Facebook? What's a Teen to do?

By Nee-Sa Lossing, Miramonte High School

Over 50 million MySpace accounts have been created since the birth of the site in 2003, most of them belonging to youth between the ages of 14 and 24, according to:

www.collegewebeditor.com.

"It's not okay for teens to spend so much time online, because it really affects people's schoolwork, and people just aren't personal anymore," said Miramonte High School junior Sasha Patpatia. "The other side of that, though, is that it helps you to communicate with people you otherwise wouldn't have met. I've met a lot of cool people with the same interests as me through MySpace."

In recent years, it is obvious

that the social development of teens is no longer restricted to face-to-face interactions. With the increasing popularity social networking sites, such as MySpace, teens' relations with their peers have crossed over onto the internet.

Facebook, another social networking site, used to be exclusive to college students trying to find friends on their own college campuses. In late 2006, though, the site became welcome to anyone with an email address, and has since been growing in popularity among high school students. With about half the amount of members as MySpace, Facebook creates a closer-knit community that is further emphasized by grouping

members together based on the school that they attend.

A major appeal of social networking sites to teens is the ability to create an online personality that will attract other people with the same interests.

"Social networking sites really create situations where you can find friends and groups where you fit in and feel like you belong," said Patpatia. "I think that a sense of belonging is something that every teen needs, and if they find it through MySpace, then that's that."

No matter what, teens will always find a way to create the bonds that they need to develop socially, whether it be online or not.

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